

GCBA NEWSLETTER

Season 2022-23

June 2023

GCBA RESULTS

Series 20 of the 9-High Swiss Pairs was won by Tony and Ros Reeves (their fourth win), over a match clear of Ralph Brooks and Diana Davies.

Garden Cities Qualifier: this event was won by Stroud (Mark Rogers, Peter Waggett, John Cuncer, Tom Jarman, Roger Miles, Angelo Agathangelou, David Atthey and Alison Pritchard).

County Knockout: the final saw Patrick Shields, Garry Watson, Rob Myers and Dan McIntosh triumph over Richard Butland, Rob Stevens, Paul Denning and Richard Chamberlain.

County Pairs Final: first were Patrick Shields and Alastair Catchpole, followed by Geoff Foster and Jon Hill and in third place Nick Haynes and Steven Sasanow.

Summer Open Teams 1

1st Val Constable, Patrick Phair, Jim Simons and Patrick Shields.

2nd Kanwar Rahim, John Stirrup, Nick Haynes and Steven Sasanow.

May Match-point Pairs

1st Patrick Shields and Alastair Catchpole.

2nd Ben Ritacca and Peter Waggett.

3rd Peter Lacy and Phil Sharp.

GCBA AGM Pairs

1st Allan Sanis and Tony Hill.

2nd Mike Wignall and Val Constable.

Congratulations to Paul Denning, who represented and captained Wales to a second place finish in the Home Seniors International series for the Teltscher Trophy.

GCBA AGM

At the recent AGM, the President reported that the proportion, post Covid, of face-to-face bridge played in our county is higher than some and that there were roughly 600 of our members that played in April 2022 and 700 last month – which is a good sign.

There has also been a restart and expansion of the work being done in schools to introduce more youngsters to our game, and a bridge teachers' training course organised for July is already fully subscribed.

The Treasurer reported that GCBA had been able to make notable charitable donations this year. The 'Learn Bridge' program was a successful initiative aimed at teaching bridge to beginners and donated its profits to a local charity. Two weekends were organized in the North Cotswolds, with the local charity Friends of Stow Surgery (FOSS) benefiting from the proceeds of these events. More info is on the GCBA website.

CARE AND ATTENTION

♠ 2		
♥ K6		
♦ JT9853		
♣ QJ64		
♠ A4		♠ QT8653
♥ AQT97	4♥ By	♥ 853
♦ Q7	West	♦ AK6
♣ KT53		♣ 9
♠ KJ97		
♥ J42		
♦ 42		
♣ A872		

The recent inter-club Garden Cities heat, won by the Stroud Bridge Club, produced some interesting hands.

The deal shown above was challenging in both bidding and play and needed some care and attention. After 1♥-1♠-2♣ East has a choice of how many hearts to bid. It's only nine points, but the shortage and fit with partner must make it worth 3♥ which partner will happily raise to game.

The ♦J was led at all tables. With several club losers to take care of you must be optimistic about the whereabouts of the ♣A so it seems right to win ♦Q, cross to dummy with ♦A and then lead a club towards the King.

South takes the Ace and plays a trump, so you win the Ace, cash ♣K, ruff a club and now play ♦K for your spade discard. You could have tried that earlier, but there was no hurry to do that. If you had then South ruffing would have denied you the chance to lead clubs from dummy. When South does ruff, you over ruff, ruff the final club and you are home when you choose to play North for ♥K.

So what happened on the day? At one table East chose to underbid, so they played 2♥, but their partner played the hand well to make ten tricks. At the other three tables they all bid game, but then managed to only make nine tricks. Not easy this game – we can all do better.

JUNE PROBLEM

♠ A63		♠ Q982
♥ AKQ2	3NT	♥ 76
♦ K743	by	♦ A
♣ A9	West	♣ 876532

North leads the ♦Q and South plays the ♦2, showing an odd number. How do you set about making 9 tricks?

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IMPROVER'S CORNER

You have probably been taught that third hand should play their highest card, but this may not always be the right thing to do. On the following deal, South opens a weak no-trump and plays in 3NT. Partner leads the six of clubs. How do you defend? It looks like partner has led from a five card club suit and hence declarer has three.

♠ JT9	♠ KQ862
♥ AK92	♥ Q876
♦ KQT5	♦ 3
♣ 53	♣ AJ4

3NT by South

If you play the ♣A and return the suit, declarer will hold off until the third round, and then when you gain the lead, you will have no further club to play.

Suppose instead you insert the Knave at trick one. A declarer with Kxx in the suit will be terrified to duck this trick as it may result in losing the first five tricks. At some point South will lose the lead to you and now ♣A and another will defeat him if partner has led from ♣Qxxxx.

There is an element of risk in this play as you will have given declarer an undeserved trick from with ♣Qxx, but you can afford to take that risk, as you have control of the major suits and can see that you will defeat the contract if the club suit can be brought in.

This type of play, is called finessing against partner, and is normally the wrong play, but in the above example, it is necessary to wrinkle out declarer's stopper on the first round and to maintain communications with partner.

Another reason to "finesse against partner" is to create an entry to partner's hand so that he can later find a killing switch. Consider the following layout.

You open 1♥ as East and South makes a weak jump overcall in spades, raised to game by North. West leads the ♥2. It is clear that unless West can gain the lead and play a club through dummy, then the game will be made. The lead of the ♥2 suggests that partner holds a heart honour and therefore you should play the Queen at trick one.

♠ 5	♠ QJ72	♠ A4
♥ J532	♥ T94	♥ AQ86
♦ 932	♦ KQJT	♦ A84
♣ 87654	♣ AQ	♣ K932

4♠ by South

♠ KT9863
♥ K7
♦ 765
♣ JT

When you come in with the Ace of trumps, you can return a low heart. West wins the knave and pushes a club through, setting up a club trick for the defence before the diamond Ace can be knocked out.

So when you have a holding such as A-Q or A-J in the suit led by partner, do not automatically play third hand high. When partner has a weak hand, by finessing the lower honour you may be able to create a vital entry to their hand.

APRIL PROBLEM

♠ A	♠ K42
♥ AKQJ98	♥ 7642
♦ KJ4	♦ T93
♣ AT2	♣ Q74

4♥ by West

You were asked how you play on a spade lead.

If you only had a trump entry to dummy, you would score six trump tricks, two spades, a diamond and a club. Still, ten tricks are always available provided you play correctly. You win the spade and play two high trumps and then exit with the King of diamonds. Let us imagine the cards lie like this.

♠ QJT7	♠ K42
♥ T3	♥ 7642
♦ Q73	♦ T93
♣ J983	♣ Q74

♠ A	♠ 98653
♥ AKQJ98	♥ 5
♦ KJ4	♦ A865
♣ AT2	♣ K65

South wins and plays a second diamond on which you play the Knave. Now if North wins this trick, you have a diamond entry to get to the King of spades. If the diamond Knave holds then a third round of the suit endplays whoever wins the trick – either they lead a spade so you get your winner or they lead a club which guarantees at most one club loser.

If North held the Ace of Diamonds then when he wins the King and returns a diamond, you have a sure entry to dummy in the suit by unblocking the knave if South plays the Queen.

There is one other scenario and that is where the defence allows the King of Diamonds to win the trick, but now you just continue the suit and the best the defence can do is take two Diamond winners before either playing a black card which concedes the contract or by giving a ruff and discard which is another losing option for them.